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Source: *The Journal of Library History (1974-1987)*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Summer, 1986), pp. 510-552

Published by: [University of Texas Press](#)

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# Palace and Villa Libraries from Augustus to Hadrian

*Lorne Bruce*

Small, private *bibliothecae* belonging to Roman emperors were integral parts of imperial residences in the first and second centuries A.D. at Rome (House of Augustus, Domus Aurea, Domus Tiberiana), at Hadrian's Villa, and at Capri (Villa Jovis), Antium, and Ostia. Architectural features such as location, shelving, lighting, building materials, room dimensions and shapes, and reader space, as well as library administration, usage, and staffing, are discussed and reexamined to clarify some issues. Distinctive Roman contributions were made in these areas by developing aesthetic and functional concepts that remain useful today.

Very little has been published about palace and villa libraries belonging to Roman emperors at Rome and in the Italian countryside. The subject is only briefly mentioned in basic reference works on ancient libraries.<sup>1</sup> Even discussions in specialized literature pertaining to private libraries is limited in scope.<sup>2</sup> Generally, these libraries are not regarded as important working collections used by emperors or as cultural catalysts. It is difficult to provide an explanation for this inattention, especially when it is borne in mind that private libraries in general have been regarded as important repositories of knowledge in the ancient world, at times surpassing public collections. My examination in this paper indicates that these small *bibliothecae* played an important part in the development of Roman libraries. In fact, they were often original in design and were considered to be standard components of imperial residences.

From a historical perspective there are good reasons for studying imperial residential libraries. First, they were an integral part of the general evolution of Roman libraries. Although no detailed analysis has been available until now, it has long been recognized that architectural features of public libraries (e.g., niches for scrolls, nonrectilinear design) also appear in imperial private libraries.<sup>3</sup> On a practical level, the architecture of public and private libraries was based on three fundamental principles common to all Roman buildings. The major concepts

determining usage and design were expressed by Vitruvius in *De Architectura* 1.3.2: *firmitas*, the skilled use of materials and structural techniques; *utilitas*, the suitability of space and furnishings for activities; and *venustas*, the formal aesthetic and symbolic aspects of structures. Second, although experimental designs were utilized and location within imperial residences varied, it can be said that there were definite similarities with libraries in other private dwellings, albeit on a majestic scale.<sup>4</sup> The fundamental internal relationships of imperial *bibliothecae* with other residential types of rooms or areas such as a covered walkway supported by columns (*porticus*), a record or central room (*tablinum*), a banquet or reception hall (*triclinium*), an inner courtyard (*peristylum*), or sitting rooms (*sellariae*) were clearly derived from less imposing Hellenistic and Republican antecedents. Third, palace and villa libraries were constructed during the same period when it may be said that the passion for book-collecting reached its zenith in the Principate.<sup>5</sup> Some first-century critics, notably Petronius and Seneca, satirized the more extravagant forms of this “mania,” but it appears the trend set by the imperial ruler helped to stimulate the concept of well-designed private libraries among wealthy Romans.

Because private libraries belonging to the imperial house have remained outside historical studies of the evolution of the Roman library,<sup>6</sup> it is important to keep in mind that they were not a continuously evolving form, but rather a series of individual rooms within palatial residences. Each one possessed different site problems, aims, and aesthetic qualities, a consideration that is also true (and often ignored) for public libraries. To establish their place in relation to other private libraries and Roman public libraries, my article concentrates on basic architectural features such as location, shelving for the collection, provision for lighting, building materials, and room dimensions and shapes, as well as arrangements for reader space. In this way the elements of plan, shape, structure, and style common to public and private libraries can be discussed more readily. Questions pertaining to library usage, administration, and staffing are also touched on to clarify some issues. I believe these considerations show that imperial private libraries helped to promote the general process of communication. They did not simply fulfill the limited purpose of physical storage, but served as examples to encourage the expansion of private collections of literature, thereby facilitating the interplay among authors, readers, publishers, and collectors. In addition, the private library contributed aesthetically to villas and palaces, thus forming a special chapter in the evolution of the Roman library.

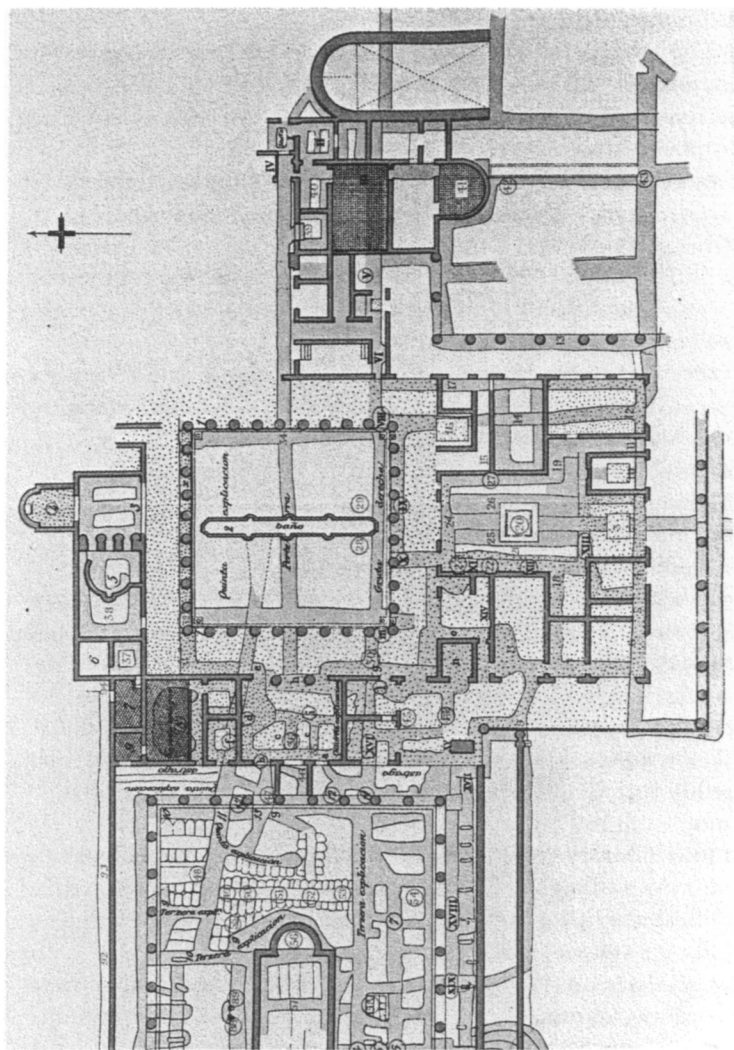
### **Private Libraries in the Republic and Early Principate**

To date, the main thrust of modern studies of Roman private libraries

has focused upon collections rather than architecture and furnishings. Of course, the magnificent library of papyri at the suburban villa of the Pisones, the Villa of the Papyri, near Herculaneum, is responsible for this scholarly interest.<sup>7</sup> Between 1752 and 1754 excavators unearthed the literary contents of this sumptuous villa by tunneling through 65 to 80 feet of mud and lava deposited by the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century efforts to unroll and decipher the fragile papyri scrolls were tedious and often unsuccessful, but eventually more than 1,800 papyri were preserved. About two-thirds of the papyri were works composed by the Epicurean philosopher, Philodemus of Gadara (d. 40/35 B.C.), who resided near Herculaneum. It is generally believed that the villa was the summer residence of L. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, the father-in-law of Julius Caesar and an admirer of Philodemus. Virtually a complete collection of the philosopher's works, as well as some works by Epicurus, have been translated from Greek (only a few papyri were in Latin). Piso's specialized collection must have satisfied the tastes and concerns of a patron rather than those of a general collector.

The dimensions of Piso's suburban villa were 245 by 137 meters.<sup>8</sup> A detailed plan drawn by the contemporary Swiss engineer Carl Weber gives the four residential areas: an entrance and atrium quarter, a small square peristyle, living quarters on the eastern side, and a gigantic rectangular peristyle stretching toward the Mediterranean coastline. Figure 1 displays the entrance, small peristyle, living quarters, and the eastern section of the great peristyle. The library was located beside the living quarters directly across from a portico and adjoining courtyard (*cavaedium*), which was never completely excavated. The small rectilinear library (room V) measured 3.2 by 3.2 meters. The interior walls were lined to a height of 1.8 meters with wooden carbonized shelves. In the middle of the room was a small table or cupboard (*armarium*) fitted with two-sided shelves holding thousands of carbonized papyri. Eighteen rolls were enclosed in a cylindrical box (*scrinium* or *capsa*) tied in a bundle and wrapped in low-grade papyrus. Beside the library was a small room that may have served as a study or writing room. Its floor, like the library, appears to have been decorated with a mosaic pavement.

Because there was limited space within the library, reading must have taken place elsewhere. Other papyri finds at three additional locations near the square peristyle confirm this observation. In the colorful mosaic paved room XVI, eleven rolls were uncovered on 8 April 1753. At point 30 in the walkway two boxes of wood with broken lids containing Greek papyri were found. Papyri and waxed tablets were also recovered in the *tablinum* or reception area (room 35) at point *i*. Thus, Piso and his descendants were accustomed to read at a number of select locations where

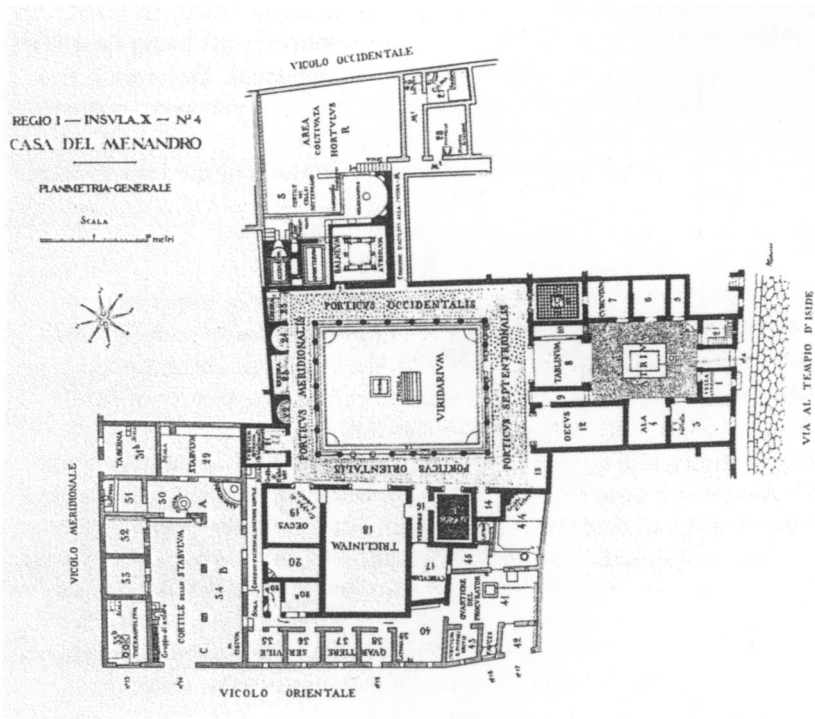


comfortable chairs could be drawn up by slaves to receive cool summer breezes or sunlight. Unfortunately, it is impossible to visit the villa now, for the tunnels and ventilation shafts were filled in after 1765. The difficult task of unearthing more papyri and furnishings has yet to be resumed.

A second library dating to the early years of the reign of Augustus (31 B.C.–A.D. 14) has been excavated in Pompeii at the House of Menander,<sup>9</sup> named for the comic Greek poet whose full-length portrait graces one room. This distinguished habitation was decorated and renovated a number of times before it was buried in pumice and ash from the eruption of A.D. 79. The last proprietor was Quintus Poppaeus Sabinus, whose home consisted of four areas: an atrium-entrance, a peristyle, living quarters revolving around a *triclinium* on the east and bathing facilities on the west, and domestic quarters on the southeast side. The library was situated on the south side of the peristyle opening onto the *porticus meridionalis* (room 21 in figure 2). Its dimensions were similar to the Villa of the Papyri, the area being slightly more than ten square meters. The floor mosaic was patterned in the Second Pompeian Style (first century B.C.) featuring a satyr and a nymph. The walls were undecorated, in the Fourth Pompeian Style (mid-to-late first century A.D.). Small holes in the southern and eastern walls indicate that shelving or cabinets could be fastened at these points.

There is sufficient space in room 21 for a small desk or a reclining chair. But it seems more plausible that a rectangular alcove (room 23) was used for study, where the portrait of Menander reading from one of his own compositions is found. On the opposite wall facing the poet is an older writer, perhaps a tragedian. It is not difficult to recognize that members of the Poppaeian family retired to this room with boxes filled with scrolls for short periods while enjoying the pleasures of the garden. Unlike the library, the alcove opens completely to the south portico, allowing ample natural light for reading or writing. The proximity of this *exedra* to the library would permit easy access to the collection.

Private libraries in the late Republic and early Empire were modeled on the architectural ideas derived from Greek and Hellenistic heritage. A private library was essentially a small storage room housing books in cabinets or wall-shelving. Nearby rooms that adjoined courtyards were utilized as reading rooms. This relationship allowed sunlight to illuminate the interior and allowed space for discussion or study. The library of the senator L. Licinius Lucullus (d. 55 B.C.) is described by Plutarch (*Lucullus* 42) in this basic configuration. Shelving, cabinets, seats, and desks were not structural parts of libraries; this equipment was probably made of wood. The shape of a library was rectilinear. Essentially it was a recess, not an independent room, because it remained subordinated to



**Figure 2.** Plan of the House of Menander, Pompeii: library—room 21. From Amedeo Maiuri, *La casa del Menandro e il suo tesoro di argenteria*, 2 vols. (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1932), vol. 2, table 1.

larger architectural components, the portico and courtyard. In both Herculaneum and Pompeii, *bibliothecae* were located in the living quarters, where literary activities could easily be accommodated. Decoration was limited—almost all the wall space, save for the front entrance, was reserved for shelves. All these features help to identify the structure and style of private libraries before the dramatic changes of the imperial age.

### Imperial Palace and Villa Architecture

One has to survey briefly the general architecture of imperial residences to appreciate the settings where imperial libraries were located. Often, elegant dwellings of the *nobiles* in the late Republican period combined sophisticated urban cultural amenities with the beauty of rural landscape. Cicero (*Epistulae ad Familiares* 9.4) mentions the desirability of having a library and garden in a home to his friend M. Terentius Varro. After Augustus consolidated power in 31 B.C., the creation of luxurious residences also satisfied the majesty and authority of the *imperator*. The construction of grandiose edifices, together with the impact of new building materials, characterized imperial domestic architecture in the early Principate.

Two fundamental categories of Roman country and suburban villas may be distinguished.<sup>10</sup> One style developed around the traditional formal qualities of architectural design embodied by a peristyle courtyard that incorporated terraces to command superb views of the Italian landscape. A second style, more informal and localized, permitted extending porticos to follow the natural elevations and scenery of the countryside or seashore. During the early Principate the tendency to superimpose monumental qualities—to include libraries, gymnasia, fountains, theaters, and so on—actually veiled the differences between these two basic styles. In general, the emphasis shifted away from the integration of parts within large-scale residences to individual components. The feature common to this trend was the replication of parts (e.g., libraries) within the same villa or palace.

It is within this background of residential architectural development that imperial private libraries may be studied. Rooms mix traditional architectural forms with new designs: the principles governing axes, symmetry, proportion, shape, and order (function and the relationship between space and mass) were juxtaposed with new plans to create original rooms to house collections. For this reason, the usual method of comparing some details of private libraries with similar ones in public libraries is not entirely helpful. Their architects possessed a familiar desire to store collections economically and to allow sufficient reader space, but solutions were sometimes unique. After all, private libraries



were one element in estate and palatial residences built for rulers who were accustomed to unlimited splendor. It is difficult to define these libraries, because there are few analogies in Greek or Roman architecture. The libraries at Herculaneum and Pompeii are relatively simple in design compared to imperial ones. Nonetheless, we must acknowledge the fact that throughout an innovative period the conventional wisdom of practical, functional architecture remained the essential ingredient for planning libraries. This characteristic is at the very heart of Roman imperial architecture.

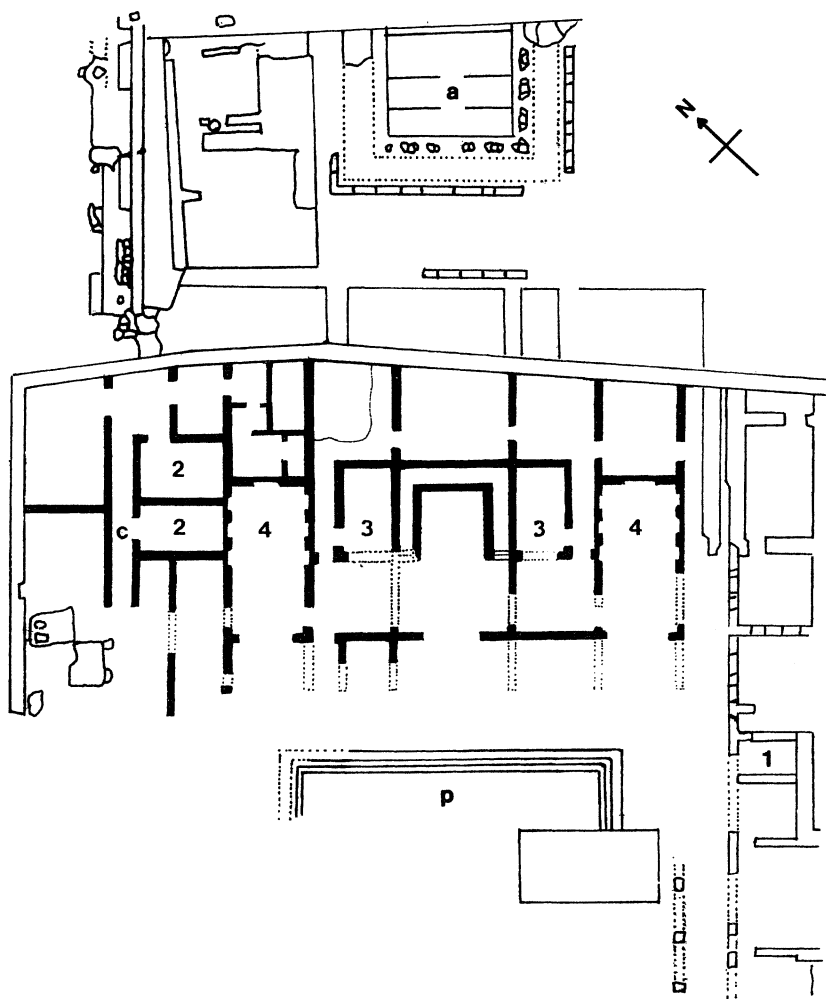
There are few libraries that have survived the damage wrought by the passage of nineteen centuries. At Rome there are *bibliothecae* located in the House of Augustus on the Palatine and in the Esquiline wing of the Domus Aurea begun by Nero. Outside Rome, at the luxurious Villa Adriana near Tivoli, there are two (possibly three) libraries; another is situated on the island of Capri at the Villa Jovis. Not one of these libraries is documented in the ancient literature or by epigraphic finds. Therefore, we must be content to limit most comments to architectural considerations. Three more imperial libraries are recorded by sources in residences at Antium, Ostia, and in the Domus Tiberiana on the Palatine. Considered together they offer significant information that can add to our knowledge of Roman libraries.

### Palace Libraries at Rome

The emperor Augustus is well known for his promotion of public libraries. Until recently, the existence of his personal library was completely unknown. The full extent of building on the Palatine, where Augustus normally resided, did not come to light until after 1956 when excavations commenced on the southwest portion of the hill.<sup>11</sup> By 1961 a small *domus* on two terraced levels to the west of the Temple of Apollo was uncovered that corresponded with general descriptions given by the historian Cassius Dio and biographer Suetonius Tranquillus regarding the emperor's dwelling. Figure 3 reveals the general plan: a small atrium (a) and apartments (room 1) located on the upper terrace, and below it on a second level about twenty rooms designed for living quarters and official or domestic use.<sup>12</sup>

Modestly decorated rooms with simple mosaic floor patterns were on the west side of the lower terrace corridor (c). These rooms (room 2) were connected to the upper level by a small wooden staircase. In rooms used for public functions the decor of ceilings, walls, and floors was more elegant. The central hall (*tablinum*) was flanked by front rooms (room 3) that had marble inlaid floors and painted stucco walls. They were illuminated through small rooms with windows opening onto the

**Figure 3.** Plan of the House of Augustus, Palatine: libraries—room 4.



## HOUSE OF AUGUSTUS

0 5 10 20 meters

peristyle (p). By comparison, the rooms at the rear with unpaved floors and no direct natural light were quite plain; these may have been work or storage rooms. Two rooms (room 4) contained rectangular niches in the walls, which were just deep enough for housing scrolls. This feature has led to their identification as libraries.<sup>13</sup>

The house was first occupied by Augustus in 36 B.C. Previously, it had belonged to the orator Quintus Hortensius Hortalus. Although it was merely a fashionable abode constructed for a Republican noble, Augustus remained here even after a fire caused extensive damage in A.D. 3. His decision to stay must have been made easier by the fact that he had been born in the Palatine neighborhood. As well, he deliberately planned to establish the Palatine as an area of royal residence (*palatium*) without offending the Republican sentiments of Roman aristocrats. It is no surprise to find a private library in Augustus's permanent residence, because he not only publicly cultivated support for authors, but was himself a writer. To complement the library the upper terrace probably contained a study, affectionately named "Syracuse" or "my little ideashop," where he could retire to work in solitude.<sup>14</sup> Augustus was genuinely interested in literature, and was not reluctant to impose his conservative tastes on occasions. Suetonius's *Divus Julius* 56.7 records that he forbade the circulation of three youthful pieces by Julius Caesar in the capital's libraries. However, censorship occurred infrequently. The Augustan age was a remarkably vibrant period in Roman literature.

The library in the Domus Augusti marks the introduction of Roman innovations to standard Greek and Hellenistic styles. Notably, the library has become a recognizable entity. It is no longer simply an *exedra*, a recess, attached to a portico or a courtyard. The rectilinear shape has been retained, but its enlarged size has allowed the possibility for a more enhanced status. Indeed, there are for the first time two library rooms. According to the scholarly literature of the twentieth century, these separate sections accommodated bilingual Graeco-Roman culture by housing Greek and Latin writings. Although this concept may not be the sole reason for twin libraries—it is possible the collection may have been divided for architectural purposes—I defer to this traditional concept at this point. The larger collection size has permitted the architect to employ a rigid symmetrical plan around the *tablinum*. The space for library usage (9.6 by 4.6 m.) has increased to 44.16 sq. m. in each room, permitting the inclusion of desks for copying rolls or free-standing statues and *armaria*. Undoubtedly, the expanded size stressed the prominence that literature had attained in the Augustan household: storage is no longer the library's sole purpose.

New ideas about form and function have inspired the introduction of six wall niches in each room. The niches in the western room were

uniform in size measuring 2.08 m. in height, .99 m. in width, and .35 m. in depth. The niches in the eastern room were slightly smaller: 2.08 m. by .91 m. by .35 m.<sup>15</sup> Shelving in all niches was a combination of cupboards (possibly without doors) or inset wooden framed *pegmata*, fixed open shelving without backs framed within the niches. The six niches (three on each side) flanked a decorative niche. In the western room it was 1.73 m. in height, 2.08 m. in width, and .35 m. in depth; in the eastern room the dimensions were 1.73 m. by 2.39 m. by .41 m. Both central niches were suitable for holding larger statues.

In the eastern library, where it appears *pegmata* were used more extensively, the interiors of some parts of niches were decorated with painted stucco frescoes (figure 4) perhaps portraying favorite authors. The remains of a lower cornice, which may have served as a ledge for replacing or removing rolls and for holding small vases or sculptures, are much in evidence in the western library. On the walls in the west room painted ornamental pilasters and ledges in the second Pompeian style bordered the contents of the niches. The marble inlaid floors, which once helped to protect scrolls from dampness, have not survived. Because there is no trace of a podium, movable wooden steps may have been used to reach scrolls in niches that begin 1.65 m. above the floor. The remains of a masonry ceiling divided into carved panels now rest on the floor of the western library. Despite the minor variations, perhaps due to remodeling when Augustus took possession and after the fire in A.D. 3, the two libraries are essentially similar and represent a definite break with the past.<sup>16</sup>

The small house built by Augustus did not long remain the official imperial residence on the Palatine. His successor, Tiberius (A.D. 14–37), built a grand palace on the northwest part of the hill encompassing an area of 180 by 120 m. Subsequent emperors—Caligula, Domitian, and Hadrian—enlarged the palace. In the sixteenth century, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese established a lovely garden/parkland above the remaining substructures of the Domus Tiberiana. A small part of the palace was excavated in the 1860s under the direction of Pietro Rosa. No comprehensive findings have been made in this century.<sup>17</sup> Today the huge structure lies to a depth of about twenty meters under the gardens. It appears an atrium and colonnade formed the nucleus of the residence, with a fish pond located at the southeast corner. Like the House of Augustus, it was a traditional platform-peristyle residence that looked outward from the center. The only indications of a library in the Domus Tiberiana are two references made in the second century by the emperor Marcus Aurelius and the writer Aulus Gellius.

Marcus specifically mentions a palace librarian (*bibliothecarius*) in a letter to his friend Cornelius Fronto.<sup>18</sup> Gellius speaks of sitting in the



**Figure 4.** Eastern library in the House of Augustus: painting in niche (author's photo, 1983).

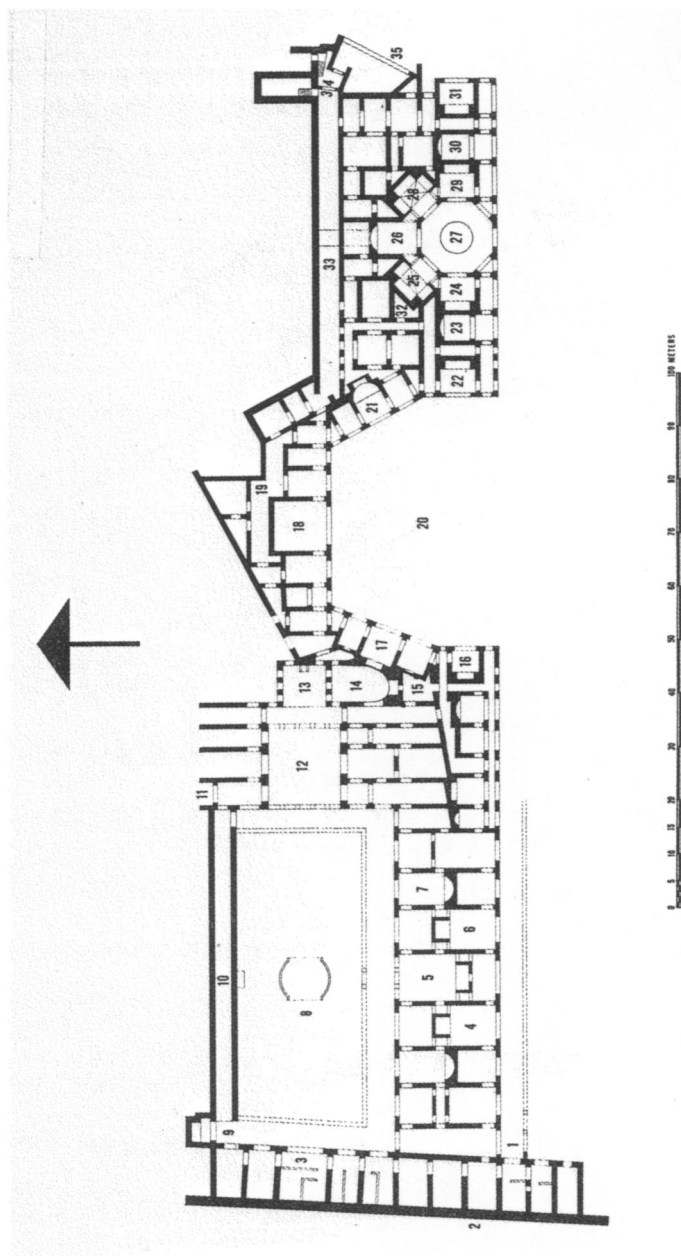
*domus Tiberianae bibliotheca* with the writer Sulpicius Apollinaris, who was well known as a teacher.<sup>19</sup> A few passages in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* suggest the Tiberian palace may have been used by the Antonine monarchs during the mid-second century. Some older theories about this library—that it must be identified with the library in the Temple of Augustus,<sup>20</sup> or that books from the library of the Augustan Temple were transferred to it in the second century,<sup>21</sup> or that its collection circulated to the general public<sup>22</sup>—should be discounted. There are not sufficient grounds to justify these theories. For example, just because Gellius and Apollinaris were in the library cannot be taken to mean it was a public library. Apollinaris and Gellius were teachers and writers, the kind of

literati normally permitted within imperial cultural circles. Their presence in the Tiberian *bibliotheca* is representative of the kind of patronage that existed during the Antonine age.

In stark contrast to the humble *domus* Augustus occupied stands the legendary Golden House of Nero, the Domus Aurea. After the devastating fire of A.D. 64, Nero conceived a colossal scheme to construct a gigantic *villa suburbana* between the Palatine, Caelian, and Oppian hills.<sup>23</sup> His architects, Severus and Celer, began constructing the central palace on the Oppian Hill. The incredible estate also included landscaped gardens, woods, a lake, and smaller buildings ingeniously spread over at least 100 acres. In fact, the Domus Aurea was never completed by Nero.<sup>24</sup> The Flavian emperors began demolishing the villa (the Colosseum stands where Nero's artificial lake was situated), and Trajan completed the process by leveling the palace, bricking up its walls, and filling its rooms with rubble to establish a firm foundation for his immense imperial baths. Today, in the dark subterranean corridors and apartments, it is difficult to recognize what a revolutionary impact Nero's mansion made on Roman architecture.

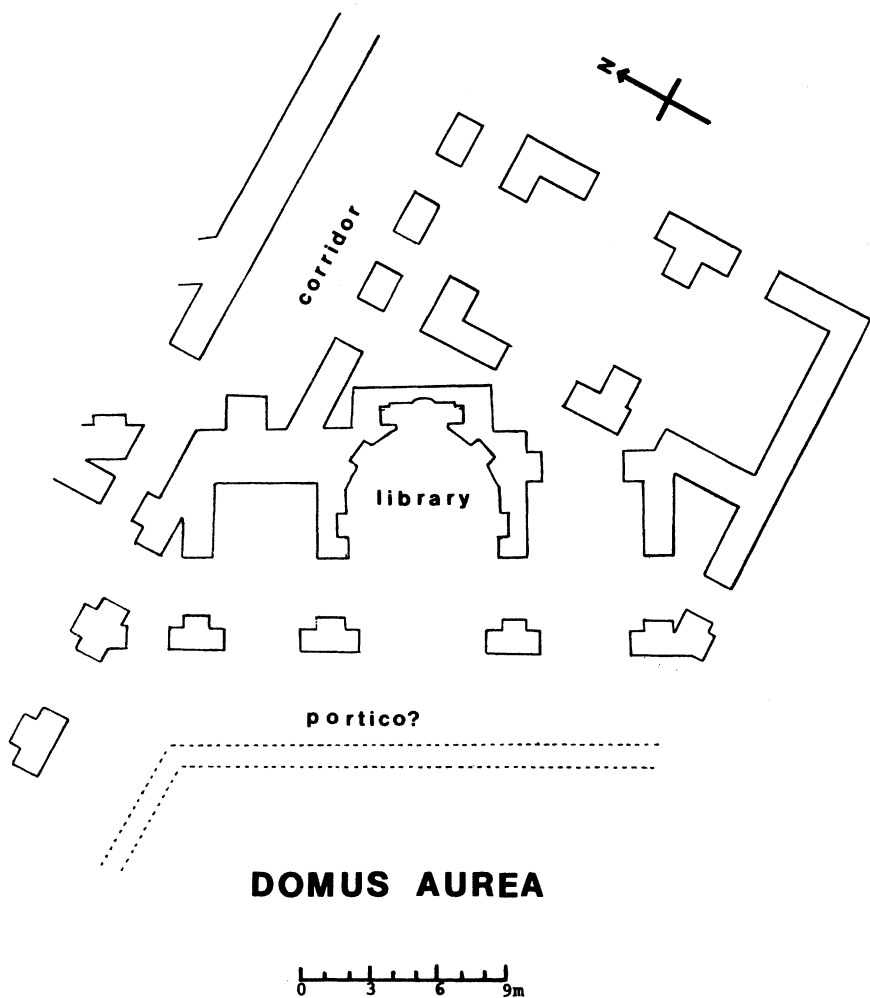
The palace is shown in figure 5. The northern side was built into the Oppian hill, with the southern face probably lined with a portico along its entire front. In the middle a five-sided courtyard effectively divided the present remains of the building into two wings: a western section for the residential part and the eastern section given over to public and official activities when required. The two wings were built at different stages and designed around three points: a *tablinum* (room 5), a *peristyle* (room 8), and a vaulted octagonal hall (room 27). Because the Oppian sloped to the south across the eastern wing, its underground rooms were partly illuminated by small openings in vaulted ceilings. Here, in room 21 opening onto the trapezoidal courtyard, are the excavated remains of an unusual apsidal library that is most notable for its departure from linear design (figure 6).<sup>25</sup>

It seems all the rooms opening onto the large court were originally decorated with marble panels, gilded and painted stucco walls in the Fourth Pompeian style. The central room 18, which may have been a reception hall, was framed on either side by triads of rooms grouped around 17 and 21. There is no trace of decoration or flooring in the library now (figure 7). The bleak walls, coldness, damp air, and complete darkness (the opening to the courtyard was bricked in by Trajan's workmen after A.D. 104) make it difficult to visualize the attractive shelving or reading area. An eighteenth-century visitor, the English architect Charles Cameron, found the library choked with earth when he made the following notation: "This room was painted, the top of the nich fluted, and in the flutes were painted trophies of musick. The paintings

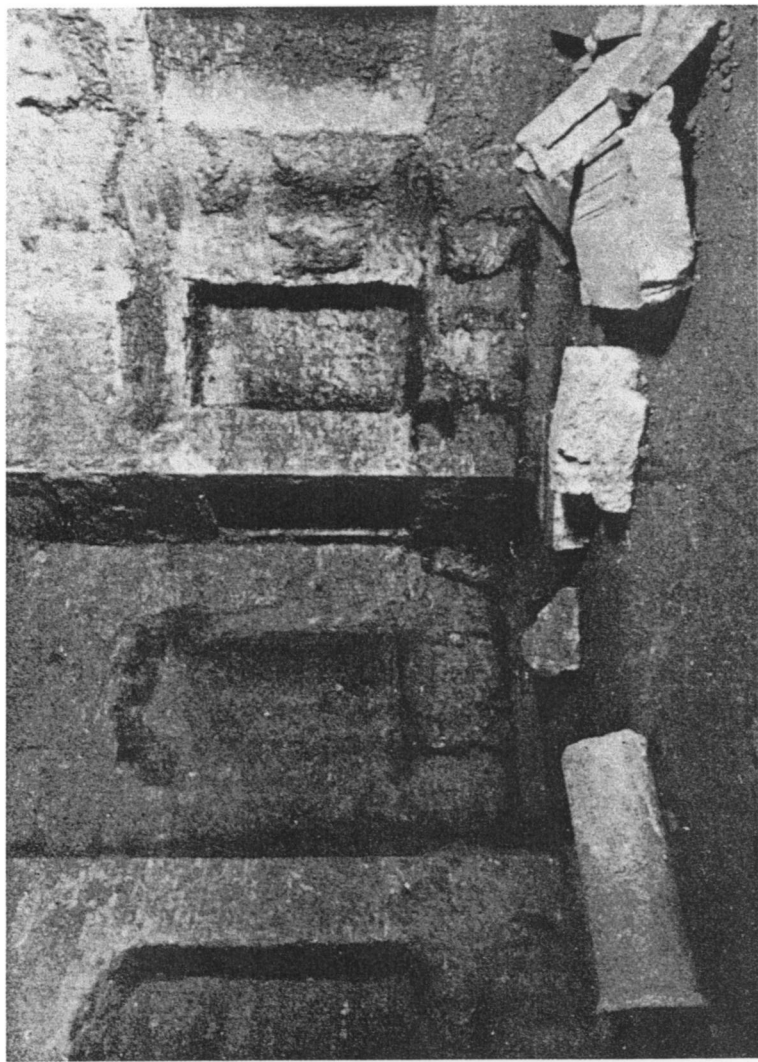


**Figure 5.** Plan of the Domus Aurea: library—room 21 (wall niches not shown). From William L. MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), plate 24.

**Figure 6.** Floor plan of the Domus Aurea library and adjacent rooms and courtyard.







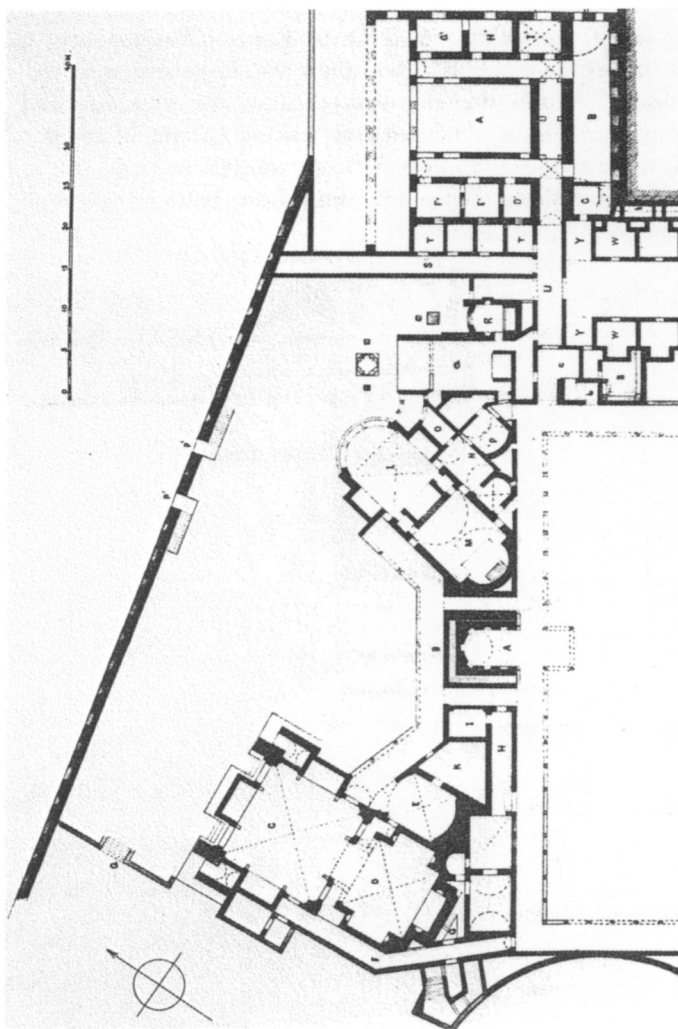
**Figure 7.** Library of the Domus Aurea. From G. de Gregori, "Biblioteche dell'antichità," *Accademie e biblioteche d'Italia* 2 (1937), figure 13.

and other ornaments of the ceiling were very fresh, but seem to me to have been scratched to pieces on purpose. It was with great difficulty I got into this room. . . .'<sup>26</sup> The niche Cameron refers to is the central rectangular recess measuring 1.42 m. by 2.9 m. (4.12 sq. m.). The main room dimensions were 5.8 m. in width and 3.9 m. in length from the corridor to the small recess. Total usable space was approximately 25 sq. m.

At the back of the small recess is a rounded central niche for a statue, 1.83 m. high by 1.22 m. wide by .33 m. deep. Beside it are two rectangular cabinet niches that are the same size as four niches in the main part: 1.83 m. high by 1.01 m. wide by .46 m. deep. All niches are 1.12 m. above the present floor, so it is certain a portable wooden platform was necessary to reach rolls in the upper reaches of the *armaria*.<sup>27</sup> Two round apertures in the domed ceiling permitted light to enter from the surface above. Illumination also filtered through the 4.2 m. entrance to the courtyard (and portico?). There is no indication of holes in the walls for *pegmata*. Beside the library two *sellariae* may have been used as reading rooms. They were easily reached through a wide 2.36 m. corridor. The sitting rooms are the first tangible evidence that the imperial private library has become a distinctive unit in its own right, with subordinate rooms attached to it. The irregular architectural form of the eastern wing is in part responsible for this development. Severus, Celer, and Flavian architects who planned the Domus Aurea were restricted in some instances by the need to satisfy the principle of symmetry within an overall nonrectilinear form. Additional rooms, the sacrifice of space, or unconventional curving lines were deemed necessary to "round out" the whole.

### **Libraries in the Villa Adriana**

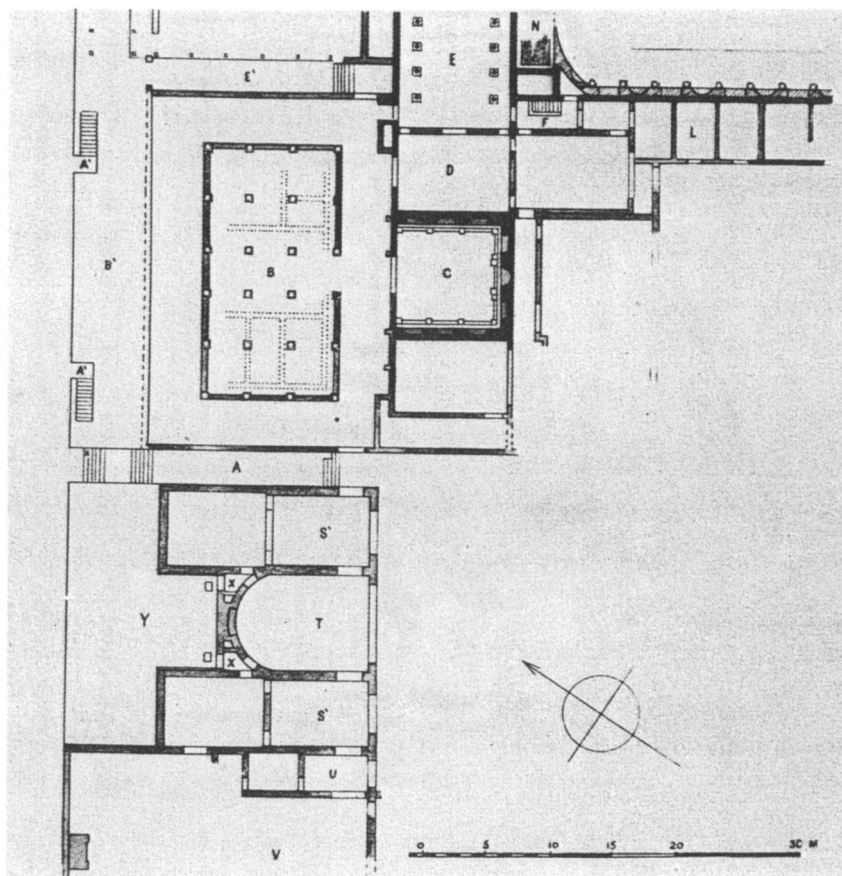
To escape the routine of the capital the imperial family spent considerable time at countryside retreats in the hills of Latium or along the coastline of Campania. Hadrian's villa stands a few kilometers southwest of modern Tivoli on the site of a smaller Republican residence. It is undoubtedly the grandest villa of classical antiquity; indeed it is more an assemblage of individual buildings than an integrated whole. Its creator, a dedicated patron of the arts, maintained the villa as a monumental showcase for architectural wonders witnessed on his extensive travels. Because Hadrian was also interested in literature, he insisted on having libraries in his winter retreat. The initial identification of Greek and Latin libraries (rooms C-D and L-M in figure 8) was made in the nineteenth century. These "double libraries" opened onto a terraced garden; to their rear lay the large (66 by 51 m.) Courtyard of the Libraries sur-



**Figure 8.** Plan of the “Greek and Latin Libraries” in the Villa Adriana: Greek Library—rooms C-D, Latin Library—rooms L-M, Nymphaeum—room A. From Hermann Winnfeld, *Die Villa des Hadrian bei Tivoli* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1895), table 9.

rounded by a two-story Corinthian portico. The first modern studies of the villa by the German archaeologist Hermann Winnfeld and the French artist/writer Pierre Gusman supported the interpretation regarding two libraries.<sup>28</sup> However, succeeding studies have completely rejected the idea, instead favoring the view that the buildings were winter *triclinia* or a belvedere tower.<sup>29</sup>

Work undertaken in the 1920s and 1930s by Roberto Paribeni and Giuseppe Lugli shifted the emphasis from these two large structures to other villa locations.<sup>30</sup> Across the large courtyard are two staircases leading to an upper terrace with a small peristyle having an area of about 225 sq. m. with three rooms adjoining it. In the middle room (C on figure 9) three walls hold nine niches, the central one being rounded at



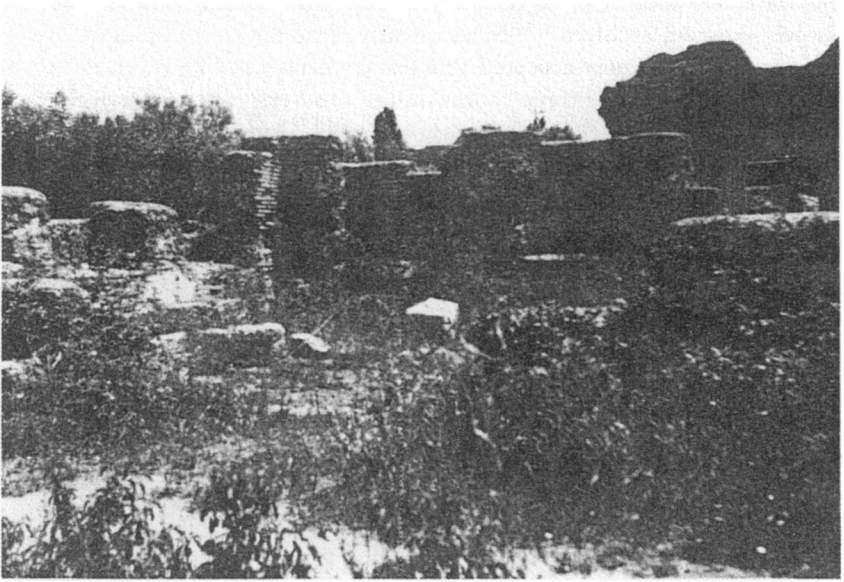
**Figure 9.** Plan of the northwestern part of the Imperial Palace at Villa Adriana: library—room C. From Winnfeld, *Die Villa des Hadrian*, table 8.

the back. Gusman first suggested this room held official records: “*armoires pour les archives.*”<sup>31</sup> Subsequently, scholars have expanded his proposal and it is now accepted as a library because of its resemblance to public libraries.<sup>32</sup> The three rooms on the southeast side of the peristyle are similar in arrangement to the group in the Domus Aurea and may be considered as a unified whole. The side rooms each measure 9 m. by 6.15 m. and could serve for reading, study, or recitals.

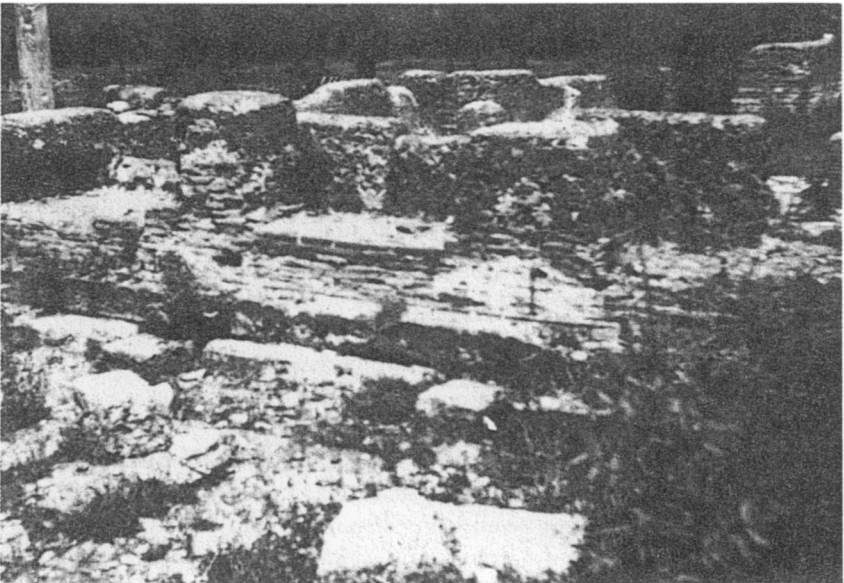
The upper portion of room C has not survived (figure 10). The usable space in the library is 68 sq. m. (8.3 m. long by 8.2 m. wide). The rounded central niche measures 1.6 m. wide and .75 m. deep. To its right and left are niches with the same width and a depth of .63 m. In each wall on the east (figure 11) and west sides are three niches of identical dimensions: 1.6 m. wide by .63 m. deep. There is a .35 m. marble podium rising .28 m. above the stone pavement. Between it and the wide niches there is a space of .40 m. Thus, rolls could easily be reached by using the podium; no movable steps were required. The walls were finished with a pattern known as *quasi-opus reticulatum* over tufa blocks. The pavement was colored marble. Wall decoration has not survived; it is assumed the surface between niches (approximately 1 m.) was finished with painted stucco reliefs. A statue or bust could be placed in the decorative niche. Light passed through a 4-meter entrance from the portico. Windows above the niches were possibly necessary to admit more light, but this observation cannot be verified from the present ruins. The placement of windows on the side, or at the entrance and rear, would depend on whether the ceiling was flat or vaulted.

A second *bibliotheca* is believed to be located in an apsed hall known as the Sala dei Filosofi or Tempio degli Stoici (L in figure 12).<sup>33</sup> The rectangular hall 17.5 m. long by 14.4 m. wide has four small side doors and a columned entrance leading to a yard and belvedere. The apsidal area 6 m. long by 11.5 m. wide featured seven large niches (figure 13) and reached up to a cupola. The niche size (3 m. high, 1.4 m. wide, and .74 m. deep) has led to the conclusion that they were more suitable for statues than shelving; hence the titles Hall of Philosophers or Temple of the Seven Sages. Some scholars think the basilica was frequented by the imperial entourage or visitors; for this reason it was in a sense a public library. Despite these findings, in the last decade two major library histories have rejected its attribution as a library. Tønsberg and Makowiecka cite the following negative factors: its magnitude (about 300 sq. m.), the noise that would enter from the four side entrances, the absence of a podium, and the unsuitability of large niches for holding rolls.<sup>34</sup>

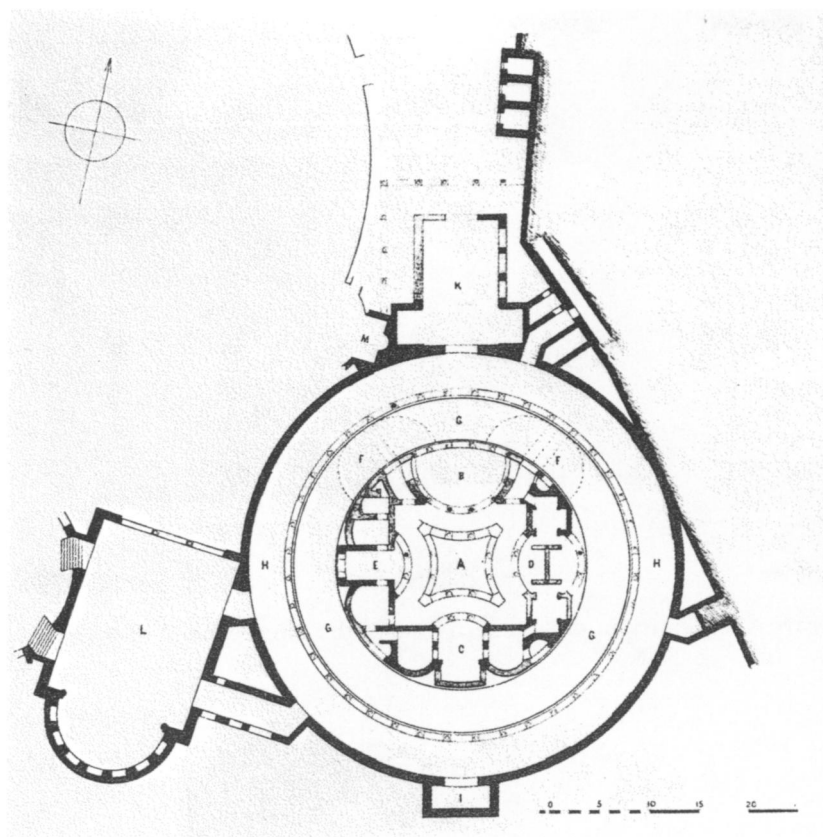
Nevertheless, I believe it is possible the basilica may have been used as a library. At first scholars compared this hall with the library in the



**Figure 10.** Entrance, eastern wall and central niche of the palace library, Villa Adriana (1983).

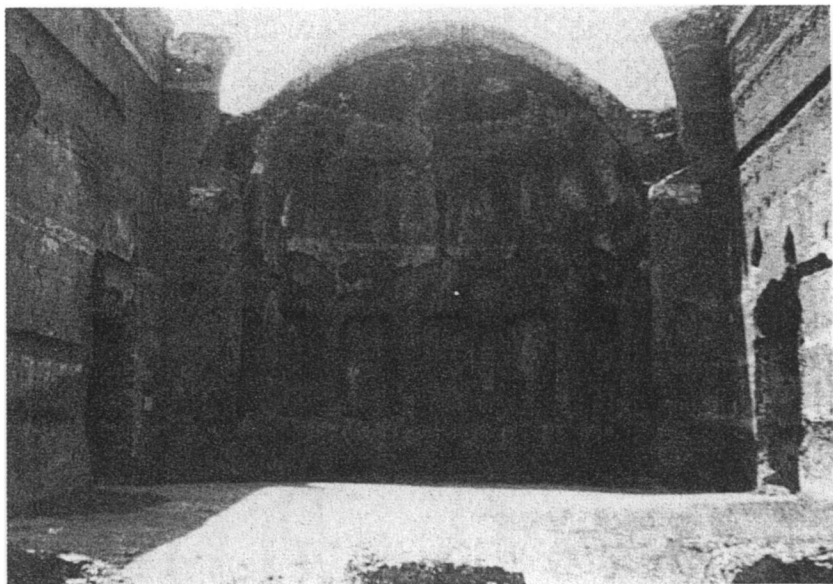


**Figure 11.** Three eastern niches in the palace library, Villa Adriana (1983).

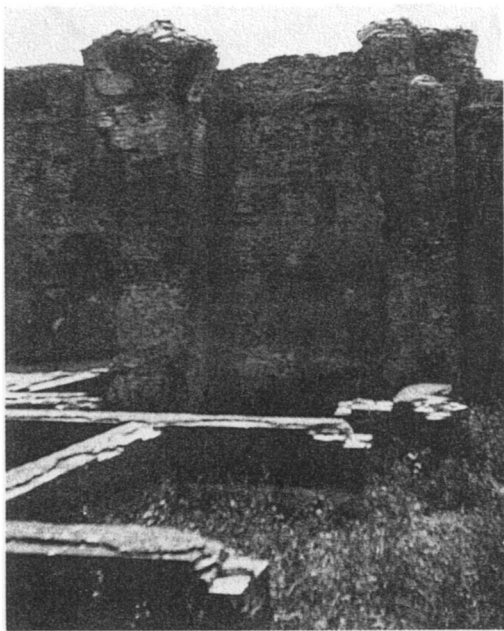


**Figure 12.** Plan of the libraries in the Sala dei Filosofi (L) and Teatro Marittimo (D), Villa Adriana. From Winnfeld, *Die Villa des Hadrian*, table 5.

Baths of Trajan—the semicircular exedral plan and niches were somewhat comparable in terms of design and collection storage. The Trajanic niches were 4.7 m. high by 2 m. wide by .75 m. deep.<sup>35</sup> Because the Sala is adjacent to sweat baths (the Heliocaminus) excavated in 1920–1922 by Paribeni, the affiliation of the two edifices seemed appropriate. But I feel that an analogy with the library beside the Temple of Apollo in Rome would be more in order. The total reconstructed area of the Bibliotheca Apollinis Palatini is approximately 360 sq. m., that is, 20 m. by 18 m. Its niches measured 3.8 m. high by 1.65 m. wide by .60 m. deep.



**Figure 13.** Library in the southern apse in the Philosophers' Hall (1983).



**Figure 14.** Alcove between libraries in the Teatro Marittimo (1983).



So the arguments concerning the unusual size of the Sala, which is about three-quarters of the area covered by the library beside the Temple of Apollo, and the excessive size of the niches are not conclusive. Perhaps the basilica may have been a literary salon with ample room for an audience to hear new or favorite works recited. The larger space could conveniently accommodate more people in a society where it was normal to read aloud (even to oneself) or engage in conversation about authors or books.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps noise from outside would be distracting; yet the same problem exists in all private libraries beside a courtyard or portico. Wooden steps could be utilized to overcome the 1.75 m. distance between the niches and the floor, so the lack of a podium is not a serious drawback. To conclude, while one can no longer speak with “*assoluto sicurezza*” as Salvatore Aurigemma did in 1961 about the Sala’s role as a library,<sup>37</sup> the possibility cannot be ruled out. It is more important to recognize that the question remains unresolved.

Beside the Philosophers’ Hall is the Island Villa, the famous Teatro Marittimo, a miniature villa in its own right dating to the period A.D. 118–123. A circular walled enclosure with a surrounding vaulted colonnade and canal frame a slightly oval island that could be isolated by drawing up bridges on the north side (F on figure 12). At the center of the island is an elliptical peristyle and fountain with marble columns (room A). A *tablinum* (room C), baths (room E), atrium-vestibule (room B), and library and alcove (room D) surround the peristyle. Heinz Kaehler provides the only discussion of this library to date,<sup>38</sup> and I am certain his analysis is correct. In the center is an I-shaped wall for two couches (figure 14). During mornings the eastern alcove received light and warmth from the canal side for reading; by afternoon the western side facing the peristyle provided the most advantageous position. Both sides of the alcove wall were 2.9 m. long by 1.37 m. wide. The oval space surrounding the I-shaped reading lounges covered approximately 26 sq. m. On the north and south were cruciform rooms with recesses running the full length of each wall. The dimensions of the three recesses varied slightly:

west:	2.34 m. wide by .45 m. deep
east:	2.34 m. wide by 1.04 m. deep
rear:	2.2 m. wide by 1.30 m. deep
area:	11.5 sq. m. (23 sq. m. total)

The north library and south library are now in ruins. Some restoration work on the bricks has been completed, but no decorative revetment has survived. The stone floor shows no sign of decoration. Kaehler believes the ceiling was flat, perhaps coffered.

The collection was housed in *armaria*; there are no holes where *pegmata* could be anchored. Windows rule out the possibility of shelves in the eastern recesses; a couch was probably situated here. Cupboards may have rested in the center of each library, but passageways to the atrium and *tablinum* indicate desks and chairs could be moved here for study and writing. Kaehler estimates that 1,500 rolls could be accommodated in one cupboard, 500 rolls within each western niche. He divides the two sections on the usual basis of Greek and Latin collections and suggests rolls could be replenished from the adjacent library in the Sala dei Filosofi. Statistically the alcove area is 13 percent greater than the area of the two small libraries. One can readily see that the emphasis in this library was on the charming alcove where a reclining emperor could enjoy the view offered by Ionic columns and water.

Returning to the Courtyard of the Libraries, one arrives at a covered hall (A on figure 8), normally described as a decorative fountain (*nymphaeum*).<sup>39</sup> Recently, Elzbieta Makowiecka has put forward an hypothesis that it is a "Latin" library, related to the ruined "Greek" library and the peristyle discussed earlier. The following points are raised to support this idea.<sup>40</sup>

1. It is necessary to have two libraries due to the bilingualism of Graeco-Roman civilization.
2. Double walls separated by a narrow corridor on the west and north, and a small seam on the east, as well as a double vaulted ceiling helped to isolate the interior and to protect scrolls from heat and humidity.
3. An axial design for the interior (7 m. by 5 m.), curved wall at the rear with a central niche, and six niches in the side walls satisfy general requirements for a library.
4. The structure was exactly opposite the two stairs leading to the peristyle and library on the southern terrace across the Courtyard of the Libraries. The hall was not situated at the center of the courtyard axis.

In support of Makowiecka's theory, it should be stressed that the building opens onto a portico.

The arguments for accepting the *nymphaeum* as a library recall those made for the Sala dei Filosofi; they are not entirely conclusive. It is more reasonable to expect that the *nymphaeum* was connected with buildings on the northern side of the courtyard, the so-called Greek and Latin Libraries that can be reached by a footpath, than with the peristyle group 51 m. to the south. The distant library and peristyle are an organic part

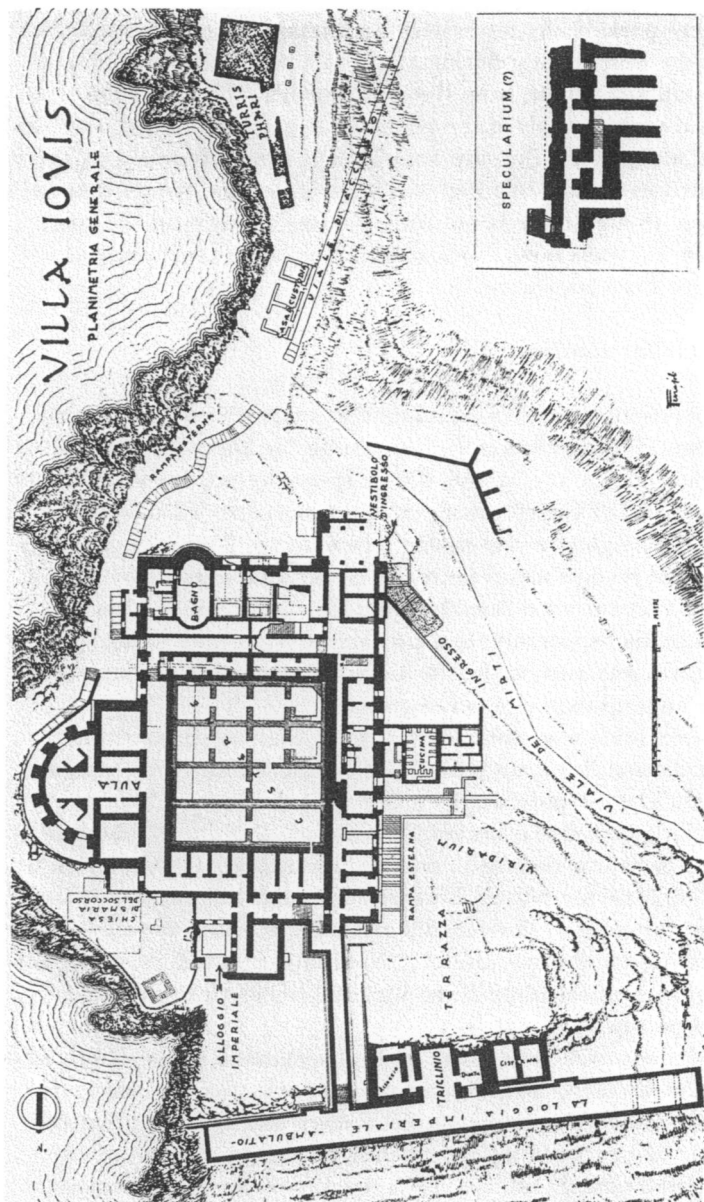
of the imperial palace and always have been studied on this basis. It must be noted that this quarter of the Villa Adriana was erected at different phases on an older residence dating to the first century B.C. Buildings were periodically renovated; for example, the courtyard was extended to the west slightly during Hadrian's reign, thus accounting for the fountain's deviation from the axis. Further, the hall is not "exactly" aligned with the axis of the peristyle; it is slightly to the west. Its axial design, apse, and niches are analogous to some libraries; yet there are two structures in the Villa that are better suited for the purpose of libraries. Even though there is no trace of water conduits in the corridor between the walls now, I would favor the hall's usual designation as a decorative fountain-shrine.<sup>41</sup>

### Libraries in *villae maritimae*

Private collections were also established in seaside retreats along the Mediterranean. Tiberius was not content with the Domus Tiberiana or suburban villas outside the capital, for he spent the last ten years of his reign on the island of Capri, mostly at the remarkable Villa Jovis, which commanded the heights on the eastern promontory. Unlike most villas its plan does not revolve about peristyles or decorative porticos. It was devised around a courtyard directly above four large cisterns bordered on the south by baths, servants quarters on the west, and living quarters on the north and east, as well as outlying open air promenades, an observatory, and lighthouse tower (figure 15).

Though Villa Jovis was partly excavated in the nineteenth century, critical work did not begin until Carl Weichardt published his romantic study in 1900. The German architect first speculated that Tiberius's majestic dwelling included a library.<sup>42</sup> However, Weichardt's impressionistic hypothesis was disproved during the complete excavation of the villa headed by Amedeo Maiuri between 1932 and 1935.<sup>43</sup> The Italian archaeologist showed that Weichardt's proposed second story above the large cisterns was totally unfounded.<sup>44</sup> Naturally, it would be impossible for the cisterns to collect water if the imperial living quarters (and library) rested on top.

Maiuri, who was well acquainted with the *bibliotheca* in the House of Menander, did not select a room appropriate for a private library. He did suggest that two large rooms on the eastern side that terminated in a semicircular hall overlooking the sea may have been offices for the chancellery (*tabularium*).<sup>45</sup> Official documents may have been housed in these rooms, because the emperor did need information to direct the affairs of empire. However, in later publications Maiuri altered his idea



somewhat by preferring to emphasize an official function for the semicircular audience hall (*aula*), and withdrawing his suggestion regarding the two archival rooms.<sup>46</sup>

Only the lower portions of the alternating stone and brick walls have survived (figure 16), so it is not possible to know if the rooms were furnished with *pegmata* or *armaria*. It is believed the semicircular hall and its two alcoves were completed in different phases, perhaps involving a renovation or extension. Tufa blocks and decorative plaster were used here. There is no trace of these materials in the rooms to either side of the rear of the hemicycle. The small antechambers beside the *aula* were perhaps waiting rooms. The two square rooms measure 7.8 m. long, giving each an area of 60.8 sq. m., or 121.6 sq. m. combined. The area of the hemicycle is approximately 142 sq. m.

Heinz Kaehler's studies at the Teatro Marittimo possibly inspired him to theorize that the archival rooms may have been Greek and Latin libraries.<sup>47</sup> After all, the rooms were similar in size to the palace library in Hadrian's Villa, and the alcoves in the semicircular chamber recall those on the Island Villa. Of course, chronologically this latter resemblance must be reversed since the Villa Jovis was completed almost a century before the Island Villa. Is it possible that Tiberius's unknown architect knew of contemporary libraries that conveniently united the functions of an *aula* for imperial audiences or meetings with a reading



**Figure 16.** Alcoves, *aula*, and libraries, Villa Jovis. From Maiuri, *Capri*, figure 4.

area or storage space for a library collection? For the answer, one must turn to the library beside the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine, the details of which Roman architects surely knew.

Nearly all modern studies refer to the Greek and Latin sections of the Bibliotheca Apollinis Palatini as architecturally distinct rooms.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, it is now well established that Augustus, and his Julio-Claudian successors, summoned senators to meetings in the library from time to time.<sup>49</sup> Further, it has been argued that during this period there was no structural division into two apsidal halls until after the fire of A.D. 64, when a complete revision of the large room was eventually ordered by Domitian.<sup>50</sup> The entire area of the undivided library built by Augustus would have been about 360 sq. m., large enough to accommodate many senators sitting on benches. Tiberius is recorded in attendance at one of these senatorial library meetings in A.D. 16, so the genesis of utilizing space for official receptions or meetings with a reading/library area existed before plans for the Villa Jovis were conceived.

In this way the semicircular projection at Capri could be used frequently on a site where space was at a premium. Because of the need for light, and the pleasures of a dramatic view, windows predominated in the hemicycle. Shelving for the collection was sensibly placed to the sides and rear in chambers adjoining the 2.3 m. corridor leading to the emperor's private apartments. Naturally, it was desirable to have access to the collection without interrupting important activities in the *aula*, especially if one room was reserved for official documents. The floor plan is different from the one at the Teatro Marittimo, but the overall proportion of reader space and storage is alike. The alcove area occupied by the reading/study area is about 17 percent larger than the storage space. For these reasons, Kaehler's theory is attractive, and I have considered the rooms beside the eastern corridor to be libraries, possibly arranged into an archival collection for public business and a personal collection based on Tiberius's tastes.

To the north of the Bay of Naples on the coast of Latium, private libraries were constructed in residences at Antium and Ostia. There are no structural remains of either library. Inscriptions concerning personnel furnish the most secure knowledge about their existence. A large porticus-style villa was built for the imperial family at Antium, but the ruins have never been scientifically investigated in detail.<sup>51</sup> The *Fasti Antiates Ministrorum Domus Augustae*,<sup>52</sup> discovered in 1712 near the villa's theater, records the names of four of the domestic staff working at the library during the first century:

col. 1, line 12 [*Eua*]grius l(i)bertus) a by(bliotheca) c. 37

col. 2, line 22 *Claud(ius) Atimetus a byb(liotheca) c. 43*

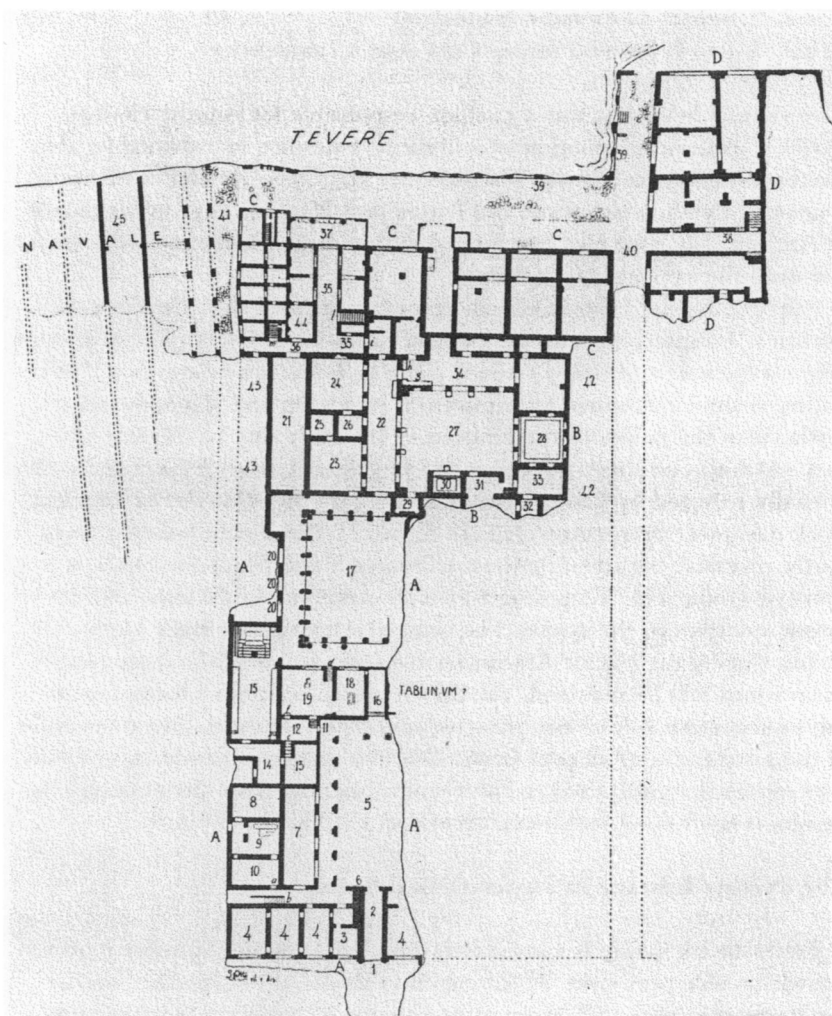
col. 2, line 29 *Chresimus a byb(liotheca)* c. 43  
 col. 3, line 3 *Bathyllus ver(na) Capr(ensis) a byb(liotheca)*

The *vilicus a bybliotheca* was a position responsible for routine clerical duties. Further confirmation of a library's existence is provided by the third-century writer Flavius Philostratus. His *Life of Apollonius* mentions a favorite Pythagorean work and letters that Hadrian kept in his palace at Antium.<sup>53</sup> It appears, therefore, that the library at Antiate villa was in use until the mid-second century.

Apparently, the Julio-Claudian emperors enjoyed the amenities of libraries. An inscription in the modern Museum at Ostia records another *vilicus a bybliotheca*: *Alcim(o) Caesaris vili(co) a bybliotheca Marcia fecit*.<sup>54</sup> If the dating is similar to other inscriptions of freedmen and slaves found at Ostia, then the palace library existed in the early part of the first century. At Ostia an imperial *domus*, the so-called Palazzo Imperiale,<sup>55</sup> was partially revealed by Carlo Visconti from 1855 to 1871. Archaeological work has never been completed. In figure 17 the Ostian palace plan is partly revealed: an atrium-entrance (rooms 2 and 5) on the south, a peristyle (room 17), living quarters with sanctuary and baths, and domestic quarters to the north. The present construction dates to two phases during the rule of Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138–161). Assuming excavations will be resumed, the library will probably be located near the southeastern side of the peristyle and living quarters. Since the walls of the *piscina*, the small pool (room 28), are niched, it is not improbable that niches were also used in the library. Judging from the general villa design, a traditional rectilinear form was used for the library.

### The Private Library in Imperial Residences

From the foregoing it can be seen that these private libraries required knowledgeable personnel. Freedmen and slaves in the *familia Caesaris*, the emperor's own staff, were quite capable of handling the day-to-day tasks. In a few cases, their names are recorded for posterity. Sometimes their positions are more revealing: witness Tiberius's *glutinatores*, book-binders,<sup>56</sup> or Flavian freedmen who were *supra velarios de domu Augusti*.<sup>57</sup> Scribes or copyists (*librari*) also served in the imperial household and could have assisted in libraries.<sup>58</sup> Their ultimate superiors were *procurators*, the emperor's agents, men who administered entire villas or palaces in the domestic section of the imperial household. This decentralized administration was adequate to a certain point, but left each library on an independent basis. Presumably, the emperors were inclined to use their libraries and would become aware of discrepancies in the quality of the collection or its maintenance.



**Figure 17.** Plan of the Imperial Palace at Ostia. From Ludovico Paschetto, *Ostia colonia romana: Storia e monumenti* (Rome: Poliglotta Vaticana, 1912), figure 122.



At the beginning of the Principate, Augustus and his successors usually appointed freedmen from their households to administrative library positions in the public service. Possibly these men received training and gained experience in the emperor's private libraries before advancing to *procurator bibliothecarum*, director of public libraries at Rome. I have previously proposed that, after the death of Trajan in A.D. 117, lower-level library procurators replaced the single higher-paid *procurator bibliothecarum*, a division perhaps based on responsibilities between public libraries and domestic libraries.<sup>59</sup> The argument need not be repeated here, save to suggest that the nine libraries described in this paper cannot have constituted all the private libraries owned by the emperor in Italy. There must have been others,<sup>60</sup> and their administration within the emperor's *patrimonium*, his personal properties, became more complex in time.

For comparative purposes the findings pertaining to imperial libraries are best summarized by tables. A general analysis of the structural remains, interior architectural details, and functional aspects demonstrates how traditional Hellenistic ideas were infused with Roman ones. The results of this century-long process led to innovative designs and remarkable features that, in some cases, have made it difficult to establish

**Table 1. Structural Preservation**

Library	Floor	Walls	Ceiling	Niches	Podium
Casa di Augusto	partial	intact	frag.	intact	—
Domus Aurea	frag.	intact	intact	intact	?
Island Villa	frag.	partial	—	partial	?
Sala dei Filosofi	—	intact	frag.	intact	—
Villa Adriana palace	frag.	partial	—	partial	intact
Villa Jovis	frag.	frag.	—	?	?

Present state: completely preserved = intact  
 partial remains = partial  
 fragmentary state = frag.  
 lost = —  
 uncertain = ?

agreement concerning library identification and typology. Even from existing remains shown in Table 1, it is difficult to generalize about floors, podiums, or ceilings because these components have suffered extensive damage.

There are some important features that set apart private libraries of the imperial age from their predecessors and contemporaries. First, the construction of wall niches for *armaria*, introduced in the Casa di Augusto, became standard. This development was facilitated by the use of brick, mortar, and concrete. There is no need to attribute the adoption of niches for shelving to eastern or oriental influences transferred to Rome's Bibliotheca Apollinis Palatini via knowledge of the Alexandrian Library.<sup>61</sup> In fact, it is possible that library niches were introduced in the House of Augustus before the library in the Temple of Apollo was dedicated in 28 B.C. Second, while the traditional rectilinear form remained a standard, curvilinear lines began to assume greater importance. There can be no doubt that the Roman treatment of interior space inspired the use of domed ceilings and apses, which appear for the first time with such dramatic force in the library of the Domus Aurea. Third, decoration became more pronounced: central niches for statues, painted stucco, marble panels, and coffered ceilings provided an attractive setting for the library. All three trends parallel the development of Roman public libraries and combined to enhance the status of the private library.

**Table 2. Interior Features**

Library	Decorative Central Niche	Type of Shelving	Ceiling	Wall Revetment
Casa di Augusto	yes	<i>armaria</i> & pegmata	flat	stucco & plaster
Domus Aurea	yes	<i>armaria</i>	vaulted	brick & stucco
Island Villa	?	<i>armaria</i>	?	brick
Sala dei Filosofi	yes	<i>armaria</i>	flat/domed	brick
Villa Adriana palace	yes	<i>armaria</i>	?	tufa
Villa Jovis	?	?	?	brick & stone

In the imperial age, private *bibliothecae* were no longer subordinate recesses beside porticos and courtyards. New designs were in order; flexible orientation was a priority; and size was increased. The Vitruvian rule advanced in modern studies—namely, that the library should have an eastern orientation to a portico to protect from dampness—was often ignored.<sup>62</sup> It is not unusual to find western, southern, or northern exposures. The portico continued to be important for aesthetic reasons, and for protection from the elements. Although the library became increasingly important in its own right, it was associated with different cores such as the *tablinum* in the House of Augustus or the *aula* at Villa Jovis. In other cases, like the Domus Aurea, it became a focus for dependent alcoves and *sellariae*.

Viewed from this perspective, the rationale for double Greek and Latin libraries that is confidently spoken of in modern works is in need of review. Ordinarily, the duality of Graeco-Roman culture is cited for the presence of two libraries within a building complex, public or pri-

**Table 3. Functional Aspects**

Library	Source of Light	Separate Reader Space	Design	Size in Sq.m.	Ori-entation of entrance
Casa di Augusto	peristyle	combined	double recti-linear	88	south-west
Domus Aurea	courtyard and ceiling	<i>sellariae</i>	apsidal exedra	25	south-west
Island Villa	peristyle & canal	double alcove	double cruci-form	23	north and south
Sala dei Filosofi	courtyard	combined	apsidal hall	300	north-east
Villa Adriana palace	peristyle (and windows?)	<i>sellariae</i>	recti-linear	68	north-west
Villa Jovis	corridor (and windows?)	hemi-cycle alcoves	double (?) recti-linear	122	west

vate.<sup>63</sup> However, one might add that the Roman admiration for symmetry and proportion also contributed to the development of twin libraries. The equality of left and right and harmonious proportion are principles that are apparent at once at the Villa Jovis, Casa di Augusto, and Island Villa. Also, the metamorphosis of the private library from a small *exedra* to a double or larger independent entity was partly influenced by the symbolic need for "imperial" qualities. Because the emperor's position was unique, architects sought aesthetic expressions for his private/public nature, for personal majesty and literary patronage.

Vitruvius captured the essence of this process during Augustus's reign: he spoke of the need for beautiful libraries in the houses of nobility where official and personal business is conducted.<sup>64</sup> This is not to say that double libraries did not reflect the linguistic division of culture idealized by the privileged elite. There are numerous inscriptions at Rome showing clerical library assistants tending collections based on language, and literary reference to Greek and Latin collections. However, at a location such as the Villa Jovis, a good explanation for double libraries might be that two rooms were needed—one for official documents, one suited to personal tastes. At the Island Villa two cruciform libraries better satisfy the need to unify the eastern portion and to provide linkages to the atrium and *triclinium* than they do to satisfy the duality of literature. It should be recognized now that there are additional architectural explanations for the origin of double libraries, their contents, and arrangement.

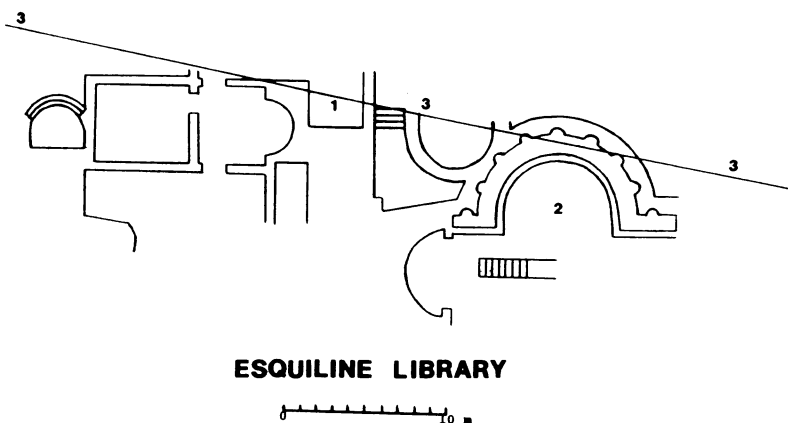
The impact made by imperial residential libraries in the first and second centuries A.D. is difficult to determine, because the evidence is indirect. Book collecting and literary patronage was widespread, stimulated by some imperial rulers, who themselves wrote for pleasure.<sup>65</sup> As Martial relates, it became customary for wealthy Romans to have libraries in their country houses and villas, but, of course, these may have been modeled to some extent on public collections.<sup>66</sup> Many private libraries were built in the interest of preservation, education, and research. However, Roman satirists suggest other motives as well. In the second century Lucian of Samosata heaped scorn upon *The Ignorant Book-Collector* for buying and accumulating books on a lavish scale for the express purpose of attracting the emperor's attention (in this case, Marcus Aurelius): Lucian was outraged that the Syrian bibliophile would court imperial favor with such a brazen display of learning.<sup>67</sup> Obviously, the private library flourished for many reasons, some ignoble.

A brief survey of well-known literary sources and legal decisions enables some assessment of the salutary influence of imperial residential libraries to be made. A number of innovative features unrelated to Greek or Hellenistic styles became commonplace in private libraries after the reign of Augustus.

1. Double Greek and Latin collections: Petronius ridiculed his fictional freedman, Trimalchio, for boasting about two libraries, one Greek, one Latin, a possession a well-bred person would take for granted.<sup>68</sup>
2. Apsidal rooms and wall niches: Pliny the Younger remarked that a library in his Laurentine villa was in an apsidal room (*cubiculum in hapsida curvatum*), which permitted light to enter through each window during the course of the day. His shelves were built into one wall (*armarium insertum est*).<sup>69</sup>
3. Decorative furniture, pictures and inscriptions: Seneca scoffed at men who sought to have bookcases of citrus wood and ivory simply for vulgar ostentation.<sup>70</sup> The younger Pliny writes of his friend Herennius Severus, who wanted to obtain pictures of Cornelius Nepos and Titus Catus to adorn his library.<sup>71</sup> In fifth-century Gaul, Rusticus described a private library adorned with portraits of orators and poets in mosaic wax and plaster with appropriate inscriptions below each figure.<sup>72</sup>

By Nero's reign Seneca considered a library a necessary part of a stylish home, assuming equal importance with hot and cold baths, and three centuries later Sidonius Apollinaris praised his friend's country mansion for the same reason.<sup>73</sup> In the imperial age, legal decisions sanctioning property rights helped define the place of libraries as integral parts of private estates. Some decisions by Marcus Cocceius Nerva (d. A.D. 33) and Masurius Sabinus were codified later by the jurists Julius Paulus and Domitius Ulpianus. Paulus ruled that land bequeathed with books and libraries (*bibliotheca*) were rightfully included in a legacy.<sup>74</sup> Ulpian also concluded that freestanding cupboards (*armaria*), libraries (*bibliotheca*), or books could be part of an inheritance, but normally shelving (*armaria* or *pegmata*) fixed on walls belonged to a building.<sup>75</sup> Although caution must be used in evaluating influences, from the evidence at hand it would be difficult to deny that the libraries studied in this paper made a valuable contribution to Roman library architecture.

The remains of one private library in a townhouse dating to the fourth century give some support for this judgment. The library (figure 18) was discovered in Rome on the Esquiline Hill near the graceful church of San Martino ai Monti by the archaeologist Rodolfo Lanciani in December 1883.<sup>76</sup> Because construction of the modern Via dello Statuto (line 3-3-3) was in progress, time for intensive excavation of the dwelling was not available. Yet the size, location, interior, and decoration of the library (room 1) are familiar without reference to public libraries, and Lanciani identified a relatively large library (approximately 4.5 m. by 7 m. or 32 sq. m. ) adjacent to the atrium and nymphaeum (room 2) in

**Figure 18.** Private library on the Esquiline Hill.

the living quarters. Its walls were undecorated from the floor to a height just above 1 m. Above this level the walls were handsomely decorated in stucco with painted pilasters at 1.5 m. intervals enclosing a square surface, in the middle of which were painted medallions about .85 m. in diameter. On one of the medallion frames appeared the red lettering (*A*)*polonius Thyan(eus)*, the name of the pagan neo-pythagorean philosopher who lived in the first century A.D.<sup>77</sup> Although there was no trace of shelving or cupboards in the room, the practice of placement of inscriptions and portraits of learned men on the doors of cupboards or above the cases on walls was a standard Roman practice.<sup>78</sup> Lanciani's find calls to mind the type of decoration used in the House of Augustus. And the unknown proprietor's preference for Apollonius of Tyana mirrors Hadrian's taste for authorship at his Antiate villa.

Placed in the context of imperial history, the development of the private library was similar to that of the public library in many ways. The opportunity for distinctive Roman contributions—separate Greek and Latin sections, the use of vaults, niches, apses, and curvilinear lines, balconies, the union of storage and study space in one room, furnishings, and decoration—occurred in both types, and innovations in one could be adapted or refined in another. For private libraries, this growth

can best be traced in imperial residences for a century and a half. Modern architectural studies, which have concentrated on public libraries, have outlined the historical evolution of double libraries, eastern influences on architectural library form, the library's association with temple precincts, or basic library typology ("Langhaus," "Breithaus," or "Stadtroemische Bauform"). To my mind, the pragmatic Romans were not very interested in these abstract trends. They conceived new plans about library form and function by building upon Greek and Hellenistic standards. The Roman genius lies in the ability to devise functional and attractive interior space for their well-educated Graeco-Roman users that complemented both public and private settings where study, reading, storage, and gatherings were combined. These serviceable Roman concepts resurfaced prominently in the eighteenth-century libraries of the English gentry conceived by Robert Adam.<sup>79</sup> The impact of this classical style on library architecture continues today.

## Notes

1. See Elzbeta Makowiecka, *The Origin and Evolution of Architectural Form of the Roman Library* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu, 1978), pp. 73-78; Jeppe Tønsberg, *Offentlige Biblioteker i Romerriget i det 2. Århundrede e Chr.* (Copenhagen: Danmarks Biblioteksskole, 1976), pp. 60-65; and Fritz Milkau and Georg Leyh (eds.), *Handbuch der Bibliothekswissenschaft* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1955), vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 117-118.

2. Carl Wendel, "Die Bauliche Entwicklung der Antiken Bibliothek," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswissen* 63 (1949): 425-426 (reprinted in his *Kleine Schriften zum Antiken Buch und Bibliothekswesen* [Cologne: Greven, 1974], p. 158); Herman Jean de Vleeschauwer, "The Roman Library," *Mousaion* 72 (1964): 119.

3. Giorgio de Gregori, "Biblioteche dell'antichità," *Accademie e Biblioteche d'Italia* 11 (1937): 20-21; and Christian Callmer, "Antike Bibliotheken," *Acta Instituti Romani Regni Sueciae (Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Institutet i Rom)* 10, *Opuscula Archaeologica* 3 (1944): 160-161, 176.

4. However, Makowiecka, *Roman Library*, p. 6, rejects this line of reasoning, stressing the public aspects of the emperor and his dwellings.

5. See Felix Reichman, "The Book Trade at the Time of the Roman Empire," *Library Quarterly* 7 (1938): 40-76.

6. For example, they receive no mention by Bernt Goetz, "Antike Bibliotheken," *Jahrbuch der deutschen archaeologischen Instituts* 52 (1937): 225-247.

7. Domenico Comparetti, "La Bibliothèque de Philodème," in *Mélanges offerts à m. Emile Chatelain par ses élèves et ses amis, 15 avril 1910* (Paris: H. Champion, 1910), pp. 118-129; Christian Jensen, "Die Bibliothek von Herculaneum," *Bonner Jahrbücher* 135 (1930): 49-61.

8. For a complete description of papyri finds and the library, see articles by Carlo Gallavotti, "La custodia dei papyri nella Villa Ercolanese," *Bollettino dell'Istituto di Patologia del Libro, Roma* 2 (1940): 53-63; and "La libreria di una villa romana ercolanese," *Bollettino* 3 (1941): 129-145. The excavation of the entire villa is described in detail by Domenico Comparetti and Giulio de' Petra,

*La villa ercolanese dei Pisoni i suoi monumenti e la sua biblioteca* (Turin: Ermanno Loescher, 1883).

9. Amedeo Maiuri, *La casa del Menandro e il suo tesoro di argenteria*, 2 vols. (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1932), vol. 1, pp. 84–89; and Lawrence Richardson, Jr., "The Libraries of Pompeii," *Archaeology* 30 (1977): 397–399.

10. See Alexander McKay, *Houses, Villas and Palaces in the Roman World* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975) pp. 100–135; and J. B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981), pp. 193–210.

11. See papers by Gianfilippo Carettoni, "I problemi della Zona Augustea del Palatino alle luce dei recenti scavi," *Atti della Pontifica Accademia Romana di Archeologia, Rendiconti* 39 (1967): 55–75; "The House of Augustus—I," *Illustrated London News*, 20 September 1969: 24–25; and *Das Haus des Augustus auf dem Palatin* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1983).

12. I wish to thank Dottoressa I. Iacopi for permission to visit the Casa di Augusto and the Domus Aurea, which were closed to the public in summer 1983. My travel and research expenses were generously supported by the University of Guelph.

13. Carettoni, "House of Augustus," p. 24, McKay, *Houses, Villas and Palaces*, p. 72; and Carettoni, *Das Haus*, pp. 32–33.

14. Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 72.2. According to John M. Carter, *Divus Augustus* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1982), p. 194, there is no evidence to suggest "Syracuse" formed part of the house on the Palatine. But I prefer the standard translations provided by John C. Rolfe, *Suetonius*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959–1960), vol. 2, pp. 236–237, or Robert Graves, *The Twelve Caesars* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1957), p. 91, because the study area is more closely associated with the libraries: see Carettoni, *Das Haus*, p. 92.

15. Two eastern niches deviate slightly from the general size. Near the block the depth of one niche is .38 m. Opposite it, beside the entrance, the width of one niche is .99 m. This variation is possibly due to renovation.

16. Volker Michael Strocka, "Römische Bibliotheken," *Gymnasium* 88 (1981): 308, has rejected the interpretation of these rooms as libraries. He regards the narrow depth of the niches, the lack of a podium, and painting inside niches as drawbacks. He suggests the extending ledge held vases and statues. However, his interpretation of these features does not preclude the room's use as a library: for example, the niche portrait may have appeared above the scrolls, the .35 m. deep shelves could accommodate an average papyrus roll or rolls specially sized for this niche. Of course, statuary was common in all libraries. See John Willis Clark, *The Care of Books*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), pp. 72–77, for similar types of medieval niches.

17. For brief descriptions and bibliography, see Samuel Ball Platner, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, revised by Thomas Ashby (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), pp. 191–194; and Ernest Nash, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, 2 vols., rev. ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968), vol. 1, pp. 365–374.

18. Marcus Cornelius Fronto, *Epistulae* 4.5.

19. Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 13.20.1.

20. André Langie, *Les bibliothèques publiques dans l'ancienne Rome et dans l'Empire Romain* (Fribourg: Fragnière Frères, 1908), pp. 62–63, rejects earlier theories on this matter.

21. Earlier theories rejected by Langie, *Les bibliothèques*, pp. 63–64; and by



Clarence E. Boyd, *Public Libraries and Literary Culture in Ancient Rome* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916), pp. 14–15.

22. For: Boyd, *Public Libraries*, p. 59. Contra: F. W. Hall reviewing Boyd in *Classical Review* 36 (1922): 31.

23. See J. B. Ward-Perkins, "Nero's Golden House," *Antiquity* 30 (1956): 209–219; Axel Boëthius, *The Golden House of Nero: Some Aspects of Roman Architecture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960); and William L. MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), pp. 25–42.

24. P. Gregory Warden, "The Domus Aurea Reconsidered," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 40 (1981): 271–278.

25. First identified by de Gregori, "Biblioteche dell'antichità," p. 21. Followed by Callmer, "Antike Bibliotheken," p. 161; Boëthius, *Golden House*, p. 117, Heinz Kaehler, "Biblioteca," in *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Antica: Classica e Orientale* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1959), vol. 2, p. 96; Marion Elizabeth Blake, *Roman Construction in Italy from Tiberius through the Flavians* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institute, 1959), p. 50; and Luigi Crema, *L'Architettura romana* (Turin: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1959), p. 370.

26. Charles Cameron, *The Baths of the Romans Explained and Illustrated* (London: G. Scott, 1772), p. 54 and plate 7. Cameron mistakenly believed he was exploring the substructure of the Baths of Titus. After 1907 Franz Weege, "Das goldene Haus des Nero," *Jahrbuch des kaiserlich deutschen archaologischen Instituts* 28 (1913): 181–182, reentered this room (his room #65) but he did not suggest its use as a library, nor did he find any wall paintings.

27. Neither Tønsberg nor Makowiecka discusses this library, and Strocka, "Römische Bibliotheken," p. 309, thinks the niches were too far above the floor to be used as bookshelves. Of course, he is more interested in the formal imperial features of libraries, which often do not apply to palace and villa libraries. MacDonald, *Architecture*, p. 38, notes that the library was somewhat exposed and that two niches were awkwardly positioned, but he does not rule out use as a library.

28. Hermann Winnfeld, *Die Villa des Hadrian bei Tivoli* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1895), pp. 96–103; Pierre Gusman, *La Villa Impériale de Tibur (Villa Hadriana)* (Paris: Albert Fontemoing, 1904), pp. 93–98.

29. Heinz Kaehler, *Hadrian und seine Villa bei Tivoli* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1950), pp. 106–117, summarizes the arguments for winter *triclinia* and explains their construction.

30. Roberto Paribeni, *The Villa of the Emperor Hadrian at Tivoli*, translated by Lily E. Marshall (Milan: Fratelli Treves, ca. 1930); Giuseppe Lugli, "Studi topografici intorno alle antiche ville suburbane: VI—Villa Adriana," *Bollettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma* 55 (1927): 139–204; and "Villa Adriana," *Bollettino* 60 (1932): 110–150.

31. Pierre Gusman, *La Villa d'Hadrien près de Tivoli* (Paris: Hachette, 1908), p. 66.

32. Lugli, "Antiche ville suburbane," pp. 183–184; de Gregori, "Biblioteche," p. 27; Callmer, "Antike Bibliotheken," p. 176; Kaehler, "Biblioteca," p. 98; Tønsberg, *Biblioteker*, pp. 63–65; and Makowiecka, *Roman Library*, pp. 73–74.

33. Paribeni, *Villa*, plate 7 with commentary on opposite page; Kaehler, *Hadrian*, p. 23; Salvatore Aurigemma, *Villa Adriana* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1961), pp. 64–67, illustrates a reconstructed interior.

34. Tønsberg, *Biblioteker*, pp. 62–63; Makowiecka, *Roman Library*, pp. 74–75.
35. Measurements by Tønsberg, *Biblioteker*, p. 53.
36. See Bernard N. W. Knox, "Silent Reading in Antiquity," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 9 (1968): 421–435.
37. Aurigemma, *Villa Adriana*, p. 67.
38. Kaehler, *Hadrian*, pp. 50–51, 118–121; and "Biblioteca," p. 98.
39. Winnfeld, *Villa des Hadrian*, pp. 96–97; and Gusman, *La Villa Impériale*, pp. 98–100.
40. Makowiecka, *Roman Library*, pp. 76–78.
41. In *ibid.*, p. 77, note 65, Makowiecka incorrectly states that no modern studies support its identity as a *nymphaeum*. Lugli, "Antiche ville suburbane," pp. 153–156, figures 1–4, table II; Norman Neuerburg, *L'Architettura delle fontane e dei ninfei nell'Italia antica* (Naples: Macchiaroli, 1965), pp. 234–235, no. 192; and Getraut Hornbostel-Huttner, *Studien zur Römischen Nischen-Architektur* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), p. 70, regard it as a shrine.
42. Carl F. W. Weichardt, *Tiberius's Villa and other Roman Buildings on the Ile of Capri*, trans. Harry Brett (New York: G. E. Stechert, 1900), p. 113. The library is room "d" in his imaginative plan on p. 101.
43. Amedeo Maiuri, *Breviario di Capri* (Naples: Editrice Rispoli anonima, 1937), pp. 17–29 ("Villa Jovis") and pp. 31–45 ("Lo Scavo").
44. Amedeo Maiuri, "Il palazzo di Tiberio detto 'villa Jovis' a Capri," *Atti del III Congresso Nazionale di Studi Romani* (Rome: Istituto di Studi Romani, 1933), p. 163; repeated in his *Capri: Its History and Its Monuments* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1958), p. 40.
45. Maiuri, "Il palazzo," pp. 164–165.
46. Maiuri, *Saggi di varia antichità* (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1954), pp. 453–455; and Maiuri, *Capri*, pp. 48–49.
47. Kaehler, *The Art of Rome and Her Empire*, trans. J. R. Foster, rev. ed. (New York: Greystone Press, 1965), p. 88 and illustration on p. 70. His identification is supported by McKay, *Houses, Villas and Palaces*, p. 126, and by Bernd Andreae, *The Art of Rome*, trans. R. E. Wolf (New York: Harry Abrams, 1977), p. 535.
48. For example, Makowiecka, *Roman Library*, pp. 30–31; and Tønsberg, *Biblioteker*, pp. 26–28.
49. Ferdinando Castagnoli, "Sulla biblioteca del tempio di Apollo Palatino," *Rendiconti della Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Roma* series 8, vol. 4 (1949): 381–382.
50. David L. Thompson, "The Meetings of the Roman Senate on the Palatine," *American Journal of Archaeology* 85 (1981): 337–338.
51. Giuseppe Lugli, "Saggio sulla topografia dell'antica Antium," *Rivista dell'Istituto Nazionale di Archaeologia e Storia dell'Arte, Roma* 7 (1940): 177–181, provides the best study of the "Villa Imperiale."
52. Theodor Mommsen et al. (eds.), *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1863– ), vol. 10, no. 6638. Hereafter cited as *CIL*.
53. Flavius Philostratus, *Vita Apolloni* 8.20.
54. *CIL*, vol. 14, no. 196.
55. Ludovico Paschetto, *Ostia colonia romana: Storia e monumenti* (Rome: Poliglotta Vaticana, 1912), pp. 407–421; Russell Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 76–77.
56. *CIL*, vol. 10, nos. 1735 and 1757; and T. Dorandi, "Glutinatores," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 50 (1983): 25–28.

57. *CIL*, vol. 10, no. 1745.

58. Ettore de Ruggiero et al. (eds.), *Dizionario epigrafico di antichità romana* (Rome: L. Pasqualucci, 1886– ), “*librarius*,” in vol. 4, pp. 960–961.

59. L. Bruce, “The *Procurator Bibliothecarum* at Rome,” *Journal of Library History* 18 (1983): 152–156.

60. Perhaps outside Rome at Labicum where a certain Fronto may have bequeathed property to Claudius: see the analysis by Anton von Premerstein, “*Frontonis platani*,” *Hermes: Zeitschrift für Klassische Philologie* 43 (1908): 325–336. Possibly the library northeast of Centumcellae may have been in Trajan’s villa; however, I prefer the standard interpretation that it was part of Trajan’s bathing complex: see Salvatore Bastianelli, “*Civitavecchia: Nuove esplorazioni eseguite nelle Terme Taurine*,” *Notizie degli Scavi Antichità* series 7, vol. 3 (1942): 235–252; and the same author’s *Centumcellae (Civitavecchia) Castrum Novum (Torre Chiaruccia): Regio VII—Etruria* (Rome: Istituto di Studi Romani, 1954), p. 71 and figure 7, note 12.

61. Carl Wendel, “*Die Bauliche Entwicklung*,” pp. 411–415 (reprinted in his *Kleine Schriften*, pp. 146–150); “*Der Antike Bücherschrank*,” *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften, Göttingen, Philologische-Historische Klasse* vol. 7 (1943): 288–296 (reprinted in his *Kleine Schriften*, pp. 77–82). Wendel’s ideas are rejected by Makowiecka, *Roman Library*, pp. 33–34. Erich Budde, *Armarium und Kιβωτός: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des antiken Mobiliars* (Würzburg: Konrad Triltsche, 1940), pp. 29–32, discuss library shelving.

62. Vitruvius, *De Architectura* 6.4.1.

63. To the standard studies by Strocka (1981), Makowiecka (1978), Tønsberg (1976), Kaehler (1959), Crema (1959), Milkau and Leyh (1955), Callmer (1944), and de Gregori (1937), add Carl Wendel, “*Bibliothek*,” in Theodor Klauser (ed.), *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* (Stuttgart: Karl Heirsemann, 1941– ) vol. 2, cols. 262–263; and Lawrence S. Thompson, “*Roman and Greek Libraries*,” in Allen Kent, Harold Lancour, and Jay E. Daily (eds.) *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science* (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1968– ), vol. 26, pp. 20–23.

64. Vitruvius, *De Architectura* 6.5.2.

65. See Henry Bardon, *Les empereurs et les lettres latins d’Auguste à Hadrien* (Paris: Société d’Edition “*Les Belles Lettres*,” 1940); and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius: The Scholar and His Caesars* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 73–96.

66. Martial, *Epigrammata* 7.17; and R. P. Saller, “*Martial on Patronage and Literature*,” *Classical Quarterly* 33 (1983): 246–257.

67. Lucian, *Adversus Indoctum et libros multos ementem* 22.

68. Petronius, *Cena Trimalchionis* 48.4. In 54 B.C. Cicero revealed that his brother, Quintus, possessed a Greek library and Latin book collection, but it is possible that he referred to libraries located in separate residences: see *Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrum* 3.4.5.

69. Pliny, *Epistulae* 2.17.8.

70. Seneca, *De Tranquillitate animi* 9.6.

71. Pliny, *Epistulae* 4.28.1.

72. His letter is reprinted in Karl Wotke (ed.), *S. Eucherii Lugdunensis Opera Omnia* (Vienna: Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1894), p. 199.

73. Seneca, *De Tranquillitate animi* 9.7; and Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae* 8.4.1.

74. Julius Paulus, *Sententiarium libri V* 3.6.51.

75. *Corpus juris civilis: Digesta* 32.52.7 and 33.7.12 (34) and 30.41.9 cites *bibliothecis parietibus inhaerentibus*; and 33.7.12 (25) refers to *pegmata*.

76. Rodolfo Lanciani, "Supplementi al volume VI del Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum," *Bollettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma* 12 (1884): 48–49, and his *Ancient Rome in the Light of Recent Discoveries* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1967, reprint of 1888 edition), pp. 191–193. See also Clark, *The Care of Books*, pp. 23–24.

77. The side walls of a fifteenth-century library room in the monastery of S. Barnaba in Brescia are very similar: see James F. O’Gorman, *The Architecture of the Monastic Library in Italy 1300–1600* (New York: New York University Press, 1962), pp. 43–44, figures 20–21.

78. Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia* 35.2 attributes the origin of this practice to Asinius Pollio.

79. For Adam’s residential libraries, consult Arthur T. Bolton, *The Architecture of Robert and James Adam (1758–1794)*, 2 vols. (London: Country Life, 1922). Adam briefly visited Hadrian’s Villa in 1756.